

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

New virus clusters spark fear of 2nd wave

Associated Press

BERLIN—A family in China, nightclubs in South Korea and a slaughterhouse in Germany: New clusters of coronavirus infections are igniting concerns about a second wave even as calls grow in some countries to relax restrictions even further.

In Germany, where thousands have protested remaining restrictions in recent days, health officials said that the number of people each confirmed coronavirus patient infects rose above 1 again, reflecting a renewed increase in cases. The number must be below 1 for outbreaks to decline.

Health officials worldwide are watching to see just how much infection rates rise in a second wave as nations and states emerge from varying degrees of lockdown.

Later Sunday, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was expected to take a different tack, keeping most restrictions in place as he reveals a “road map” for the country that has the most official virus deaths in Europe at over 31,600. His Conservative government was criticized for being slow to react to the pandemic, but after falling ill with the virus himself, John-

son has taken a tougher line.

China reported 14 new cases Sunday, its first double-digit rise in 10 days. Eleven of 12 domestic infections were in the northeastern province of Jilin, which prompted authorities to raise the threat level in one of its counties, Shulan, to high-risk, just days after downgrading all regions to low-risk.

Authorities said that the Shulan outbreak originated with a 45-year-old woman who had no recent travel or exposure history, but spread it to her husband, her three sisters and other family members. Train services in the county were being suspended.

“Epidemic control and prevention is a serious, complicated matter, and local authorities should never be overly optimistic, war-weary or off-guard,” said Jilin Communist Party secretary Bayin Chaolu.

Jilin also shares a border with North Korea, which insists that it has no virus cases, much to the disbelief of international health authorities.

South Korea reported 34 more cases as new infections linked to nightclubs threaten the country’s hard-won gains against the virus. It was the first time that South Korea’s

daily infections were above 30 in about a month.

Across Europe, many nations were easing lockdowns even further even as they prepared to clamp down on any new infections.

Turkey’s senior citizens got their first chance to venture outside in seven weeks Sunday.

“It’s very nice to be out of the house after such a long time,” said Ethem Topaloglu, 68, who wore a mask as he strolled in a park in the capital, Ankara. “Although I’ve been able to sit on the balcony, it’s not the same as walking around outside.”

Germany, which managed to push daily new infections below 1,000 before deciding to loosen restrictions, has seen regional spikes in cases linked to slaughterhouses and nursing homes.

German officials have expressed concerns about the growing number of large demonstrations, including one in the southwestern city of Stuttgart that drew thousands of participants. Police in Berlin had to step in Saturday after hundreds of people failed to respect social distancing measures at anti-lockdown rallies.

Chancellor Angela Merkel and the governors of Germa-

ny’s 16 states last week cleared the way for restaurants, hotels and remaining stores to reopen. The country’s soccer league resumes this week, despite a number of professional players testing positive for COVID-19, and more students are returning to school beginning Monday.

With tourism a major industry in Italy, hotel owners, tour guides, beach resorts and others who depend heavily on the summer season are pressing to know when citizens can travel across the country. In a newspaper interview Sunday, Premier Giuseppe Conte promised that the restriction on inter-regional movement would be lifted, but only after authorities better determine how the virus outbreak evolves.

Residents in some Spanish regions will be able to enjoy limited seating at bars, restaurants and other public places Monday, but Madrid and Barcelona, the country’s largest cities, will remain shut down. Spain on Sunday reported 143 new deaths from the virus, the lowest daily increase since March 19.

Taliban says they don’t have missing US contractor

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — Taliban leaders searched their ranks, including in the much-feared Haqqani network, and on Sunday told The Associated Press that they are not holding Mark R. Frerichs, a Navy veteran turned contractor who disappeared in Afghanistan in late January.

“We don’t have any informa-

tion about the missing American,” Sohail Shaheen, the Taliban’s political spokesman, told the AP.

A second Taliban official familiar with the talks with the United States said “formally and informally” the Taliban have notified U.S. officials they are not holding Frerichs. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

Washington’s peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, who negotiated a peace deal with the Taliban signed in February to allow America and NATO countries to withdraw their troops and end decades of war, asked for Frerichs’ release during his meetings this week in Qatar, where the Taliban maintain a political office.

In a statement late Saturday by the U.S. Embassy in Islam-

abad, Khalilzad also sought Pakistan’s help in locating Frerichs.

Earlier last week, the FBI took the unusual step of putting out a poster with Frerichs’ picture on it seeking information into his disappearance and whereabouts, something they have not done in previous incidents where the Taliban have taken hostages.

Pair of surviving Pearl Harbor vets die

BY WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

Two former sailors who survived the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 while aboard battleships died in recent days, one of whom was grand marshal this past December in the annual parade in Honolulu commemorating the attack.

Thomas Berg, 98, of Port Townsend, Wash., died April 24, according to an obituary in *The Leader* newspaper. He was aboard the USS Tennessee at the time of the attack.

Berg, born July 19, 1922, was a regular face at the annual Dec. 7 observances at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. In December he served as grand marshal for the annual parade, which he had ridden in each year since 2011.

During the 2018 commemoration, Berg recounted for *Stars and Stripes* how he had

joined the Navy right out of high school in 1940 and had been assigned below deck in Boiler Room 7 on the USS Tennessee on the morning of the attack. The ship was moored on Battleship Row beside the USS West Virginia.

He was walking the deck for some fresh air before heading to the boiler room for the day's work, then stopped into his living quarters.

Moments later, a clarinet player from the morning-colors band raced in, shouting that the Japanese were bombing.

"Everybody reeled back and thought he'd gone berserk," Berg said.

Below deck in the boiler room, Berg's job was to communicate by radio with a sailor on the navigation bridge.

"He was describing what was going on," Berg said. "He told us when the Oklahoma turned over, when the West Virginia was sinking and listing."

When the [USS] Arizona's magazine blew up, the repercussion drove smoke down the Tennessee's pipes into the boiler room, burning off the eyebrows of some men, Berg said. The Tennessee's stern was engulfed in flames from the Arizona's burning fuel oil.

"I was scared stiff," he said.

Berg went on to submarine duty during World War II and was discharged in 1946, according to his obituary. He earned a degree in mechanical engineering, and in the late 1960s was a test engineer for the Mark 45 torpedo at Naval Torpedo Station-Keyport. He retired in 1977.

Daniel R. Kramer, 103, of Clinton, Iowa, died Monday at an assisted-living facility in that town, according to an obituary posted by Snell-Zornig Funeral Homes.

He was aboard the USS California on the morning of the massive Japanese raid that

badly crippled America's Pacific Fleet.

Kramer, born Sept. 21, 1916, enlisted in the Navy in 1940 and was commissioned an ensign on June 12, 1941, according to his obituary.

Kramer headed for his battle station on the USS California when the general quarters alarm was sounded the morning of the attack, he told the *Clinton Herald* newspaper several years ago.

"We did not get underway before we were attacked by bombs and torpedoes," he said. "The battleship slowly sank in the water where the main deck was under water, but the rest of the battleship was not. It was a total surprise."

Almost 100 men died aboard the California.

Kramer was discharged as a lieutenant commander in 1946. He returned to Clinton where he worked for E. I. DuPont for 32 years.

Bill introduced to help halted military families

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A bill introduced Friday would provide some financial relief during the coronavirus pandemic to some military families whose moves were halted by the Defense Department's stop-movement order.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper ordered the first travel restrictions in March and later extended the stop-movement order for all service members and their families until June 30.

The bill introduced by Rep. Mike Levin, D-Calif., would amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to include stop-movement orders as a reason to terminate a lease. The legislation was introduced with the

leadership of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Reps. Mark Takano, D-Calif., and Phil Roe, R-Tenn.

A similar bill was introduced in the Senate on Wednesday by Sens. Jerry Moran, R-Kan., and Jon Tester, D-Mont., leadership of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

The update would allow service members who are moving and have signed a lease for a home or business to terminate that lease if a stop-movement order for more than 30 days is issued and they are unable to occupy the property.

The bill also retroactively applies to stop-movement orders issued on or after March 1, allowing relief for military families struggling now because of the pandemic.

Top PAC marine nominated to lead training command

BY JOSEPH DITZLER

Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — The boss of all Marines in the Pacific is heading back to the mainland to lead the service's training component, according to an announcement by Defense Secretary Mark Esper.

Lt. Gen. Lewis Craparotta was nominated Wednesday to head the Quantico, Va.-based Marine Training and Education Command, according to Esper's office. Craparotta was commissioned in 1983. He's served as a platoon, regimental and division commander before taking the helm of I Marine Expeditionary Force in July 2016. Along the way, Craparotta served as an adviser to the Saudi Arabia Royal Marines, worked with Special Opera-

tions Command, Europe, and as director of operations, U.S. Northern Command, among other assignments.

To succeed Craparotta the administration nominated Lt. Gen. Steven Rudder, now the deputy commandant for aviation in Washington, D.C.

Rudder, who was commissioned in 1984, knows the Pacific as a past commander of the 1st Marine Air Wing on Okinawa. He's also led Marine Air Group 26 at al Asad Air Base during Operation Iraqi Freedom; commanded a deployed Marine helicopter squadron during an Operation Dynamic Mix exercise in Europe; and deployed to Afghanistan, Pakistan and Qatar during the war in Afghanistan.

Test gets emergency FDA approval

The Washington Post

Health care providers will soon be able to deploy at scale a simpler, faster and cheaper diagnostic test for the novel coronavirus, a major development in the nation's ability to detect and treat COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus, as states move to reopen.

The new type of coronavirus screening, an antigen test manufactured by Quidel Corp., was granted emergency authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration Friday night. Antigen tests are a common screening tool that doctors use for other infections, such as influenza or strep throat, but this is the first antigen test specific to the coronavirus.

It is conducted by a nasal swab and immediately tested in the doctor's office or other point-of-care location, producing diagnostic results within minutes by quickly detecting proteins found on or within the virus. In a statement announcing the emergency authorization of Quidel Corp.'s kit, the FDA said that antigen tests are cheaper to produce, simpler to conduct and easier to implement at scale than the current testing apparatus, which has relied on polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests that detect genetic material from the virus.

Antigen tests are "important in the overall response against

COVID-19" and can "potentially scale to test millions of Americans per day" once other manufacturers enter the market, the FDA statement said.

"It's a really important tool," said Amesh Adalja, an infectious disease physician and senior scholar at Johns Hopkins University Center for Health Security. "This is now the next step in simplifying testing."

Quidel Corp. said that its test, called the Sofia 2 SARS Antigen FIA, can produce results within 15 minutes. The test cartridges can be placed in its Sofia 2 machine or manually developed on a counter top.

Though rapid-detection PCR tests have been used around the country, they are still more expensive and complex than the new test, experts say.

One major benefit of the antigen test is that it "allows us to arm our health care workers and first responders with a front line solution for COVID-19 diagnosis," Douglas Bryant, president and chief executive officer of Quidel Corp., said in a statement.

The FDA has authorized three different tests to help detect, diagnose and track the spread of the novel coronavirus: the antigen test, the PCR test and an antibody screening, which unlike the first two tests does not diagnose an active case of the virus but detects antibodies to it, which signal that the person was previously

infected and has developed an immune response.

Put together, the three tests could offer a path forward for more widespread and thorough screening as Americans nationwide prepare to navigate safe returns to their jobs and the reopening of amenities that will place them in close contact with others.

A drawback of the antigen test, however, is that it is less reliable than the PCR test because it is not as sensitive, the FDA said. Positive results are "highly accurate," but a negative result does not necessarily rule out the presence of the virus.

To backstop a potential false negative, the FDA said in the release that all negative antigen tests should be confirmed with a PCR test — a common protocol for antigen testing of other infections.

Last month, the World Health Organization issued a statement of "advice" for health care providers and officials, saying they applauded the innovative efforts of test developers but that they did not recommend the use of antibody or antigen tests outside a research setting.

"Inadequate tests may miss patients with active infection or falsely categorize patients as having the disease when they do not, further hampering disease control efforts," WHO officials said.

Governors aim to boost state production of vital supplies

Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — Frustrated by scarce supplies and a chaotic marketplace amid the coronavirus outbreak, some U.S. governors are seeking to bolster their home-state production of vital medical and protective equipment to ensure a reliable long-term source for state stockpiles.

The efforts come as states have been competing against each other, the federal government, hospitals, emergency responders and even other countries to get items such as N95 masks, gloves, medical gowns and hand sanitizer — often paying higher-than-usual prices because of the high demand.

Before the coronavirus pandemic, the U.S. got much of its medical supplies from China. But China limited exports earlier this year amid its own fight against the virus.

When the federal stockpile ran short, states that had only minimal supplies were left scrambling to try to buy needed equipment.

"We always hear about overseas — it's cheaper to do it in China, it's cheaper to do it in other countries," Missouri Gov. Mike Parson told *The Associated Press*. "But one thing we've learned about this whole deal is we need to be dependent on ourselves. ... If we can do it here in Missouri, I think it would be well-worth the extra money."

Governors in Florida, Indiana and Massachusetts made similar statements as states start to shift from triaging current needs to planning for a potential second wave of the coronavirus or some unknown future disease. While numerous U.S. companies have shifted production lines temporarily to make needed supplies, some states are looking for a long-term commitment.

Sailor tests positive after arriving in S. Korea

BY KIM GAMEL

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — An American sailor tested positive for the coronavirus while in quarantine after arriving on a U.S.-government-chartered flight from Japan for an assignment in South Korea, the military said Friday.

Separately, South Korean health authorities worried about a new cluster infection in Seoul after 13 new cases, including a South Korean non-commissioned officer, were

linked to a virus patient who went clubbing in the trendy neighborhood of Itaewon.

The new cases underscored the fragility of South Korea's recovery as it begins to ease restrictions after several days with few to no local infections.

USFK commander Gen. Robert Abrams said Wednesday that the military restrictions, which include a ban on nonessential travel off base and dining at local restaurants and bars, would remain in place while he monitors South Ko-

rea's progress.

"Since testing positive, the sailor has been moved to Camp Humphreys' isolation barracks designated for confirmed COVID-19 cases," the command said.

He was the third active-duty American service member to test positive for the virus on the divided peninsula, and USFK's 27th case overall. The others were military dependents, contractors and other U.S. and South Korean employees of USFK.

Polar vortex brings rare May snow to East Coast

Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Mother's Day weekend got off to an unseasonably snowy start in the Northeast on Saturday thanks to the polar vortex bringing cold air down from the north.

Some higher elevation areas in northern New York and New England reported snowfall accumulations of up to 10 inches, while traces of snow were seen along the coast from Maine to Boston to as far south as Manhattan.

John Cannon, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Gray, Maine, said parts of northern New England saw as much as 10 inches of snow and even coastal areas of Maine and New Hampshire got a dusting. There were even reports of flurries in Boston.

"We've had several inches in many areas in the Northeast. This is a rare May snow event," he said.

The hardest hit areas were hill town communities like Sugar Hill, N.H., which got 10.5 inches, and Carrabassett Valley in Maine, which got 9 inches, he said.

Conditions at the Mount Washington Observatory, atop the highest peak in the northeast, were downright arctic Saturday afternoon, with the wind chill at minus 22 degrees and winds gusting at 87 mph.

In many areas, the snowfall was one for the record books, even if it didn't stick around. Massachusetts hadn't seen measurable snow in May since 2002, while in Manhattan's Central Park, the flakes tied a record set in 1977 for latest snow of the season.

Cannon said the snow was to give way to strong winds upward of 40 and 50 mph in much of the Northeast for the remainder of Saturday, along with unusually cold conditions.

Congress moves to fill virus response void left by Trump

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — As President Donald Trump tries to move on from the coronavirus, Congress is rushing to fill the void and prepare the country for the long fight ahead.

Jolted by the lack of comprehensive federal planning as states begin to reopen, lawmakers of both parties, from the senior-most senators to the newest House member, are jumping in to develop policies and unleash resources to prevent a second wave.

In the House and Senate, lawmakers are pushing sweeping proposals for a national virus testing strategy. One seasoned Republican wants a war-like public health fund. A New Jersey freshman launched neighboring colleagues on a regional bipartisan task force to help

guide Northeastern states back to work.

"This is going to be on us," said Rep. Mikie Sherrill, D-N.J., a former Navy helicopter pilot in her first term in Congress.

The legislative branch is stepping up in the absence of a consistent, convincing White House strategy, in much the way governors have been forced to go it alone during the nation's pandemic response.

Unlike the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks, when President George W. Bush called on Congress to create a Department of Homeland Security, or during the Great Depression, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt led the nation to the New Deal, Trump is not seeking a legacy-defining accomplishment in the heat of national crisis.

Instead, Trump has turned the life-and-death decision-making away from the federal government and onto the states for the next phase of the response. He expects governors to arrange virus testing systems and find their own medical gear, saying the federal government is a "supplier of last resort." The White House coronavirus task force has abandoned daily briefings.

Encouraging the economic rebound, Trump said Thursday he's looking forward to "getting on with it."

"When the nation is in the middle of the major, historic crisis, the norm is that both branches focus on the issue," said Julian E. Zelizer, a Princeton professor of history and public policy. "It's not normal for the president to just move on."

Jobless rate hurts Trump reelection bid

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The record unemployment rate reported on Friday captured the pain of a nation where tens of millions of jobs suddenly vanished, devastating the economy and forcing President Donald Trump to overcome historic headwinds to win a second term.

Just a few short months ago, Trump planned to campaign for reelection on the back of a robust economy. That's a distant memory after more than 20 million jobs were lost in April, leading to an unemployment rate of 14.7%, the highest since the Great Depression.

There's no parallel in U.S. history for the suddenness or severity of the economic collapse, which is ravaging some states that are crucial to Trump's victory. The president is now tasked with convincing voters that the catastrophic jobs losses were the result of the pandemic — not his management of the public health crisis. He also argues that he deserves another chance to rebuild what the virus destroyed.

"What I can do: I'll bring it back," Trump told Fox News on Friday. "It's fully expected. There's no surprise. Everybody knows that. Even the Democrats aren't blaming me for that."

Bringing back jobs quickly won't be easy.

"The last time we had unemployment rates in this neighborhood, it took us five years to get there," said Erica Groshen, an economist at Cornell University and former commissioner of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "This time, we will have achieved that in two months."

The suddenness of the crisis has been a shock to Americans, who will be looking for reassurance from Trump.

"The White House can make the point that the collapse was not the result of economic policies but an unprecedented global pandemic," said Kevin Madden, a Republican strategist who was a senior adviser on Mitt Romney's 2012 presidential campaign. "But they need to look forward, too: Present a detailed roadmap, restore people's confidence and pledge to work with Democrats and Republicans alike."

Many of the layoffs are classified as temporary, which means workers could get recalled as the outbreak subsides and the unemployment rate would fall. But it's unlikely to immediately return to the 3.5% that Trump was celebrating, as consumer spending might be slow to recover and businesses and workers adjust to changes forced by the disease.

Iran says it's ready for US prisoner swap

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran said that it is ready for unconditional prisoner swap talks with the United States because of fears that the coronavirus could put the lives of the prisoners at risk, Iranian media reported Sunday.

An Iranian news website, Khabaronline.ir, quoted Cabinet spokesman Ali Rabiei as saying that there is a “readiness for all prisoners” to be discussed without condition.

“But the U.S. has refused to answer so far,” said Rabiei. “We hope that as the outbreak of the COVID-19 disease threatens the lives of Iranian citizens in the U.S. prisons, the U.S. government eventually will

prefer lives to politics.”

A senior U.S. official, who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity, said that, “There has been no offer and no offer of direct talks.”

Rabiei said that Iran considers the U.S. government responsible for the health of the Iranian prisoners, adding that “it seems that the U.S. has more readiness to bring the situation to an end.” Rabiei did not elaborate, but Iranian media in recent months said that there are several Iranians in U.S. custody, including Sirous Asgari, a 60-year-old university professor.

Last week, U.S. officials said that they

were making progress in efforts to secure the release of a detained Navy veteran in Iran. But they were also pushing back on Iranian suggestions that a swap was in the works for the imprisoned Iranian professor. U.S. officials have been trying to deport Asgari since last year.

Ken Cuccinelli, the acting deputy Homeland Security secretary, said Wednesday that the cases of American detainee Michael White in Iran and Asgari have never been connected. He expressed frustration with recent comments from Iranian officials that there may be a link between the two and complained that Iran had been slow to accept Asgari's return.

Russia, Belarus a contrast in Victory Day celebrations

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russian President Vladimir Putin marked Victory Day, the anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II, in a ceremony shorn of its usual military parade and pomp by the coronavirus pandemic.

In neighboring Belarus, however, the ceremonies went ahead in full, with tens of thousands of people in the sort of proximity that has been almost unseen in the world for months.

Putin on Saturday laid flowers at the tomb of the unknown

soldier just outside the Kremlin walls and gave a short address honoring the valor and suffering of the Soviet army during the war.

Victory Day is Russia's most important secular holiday and this year's observance, had been expected to be especially large because it is the 75th anniversary, but the Red Square military parade and a mass procession called The Immortal Regiment were postponed as part of measures to stifle the spread of the virus.

The only vestige of the conventional show of military

might was a flyover of central Moscow by 75 warplanes and helicopters.

The ceremony was the first public appearance in about a month for Putin, who has worked remotely as the virus took hold.

A full military parade of some 3,000 soldiers was held Saturday in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, which has not imposed restrictions to block the virus' spread despite sharply rising infection figures. Tens of thousands of spectators, few of them wearing masks, watched the event.

President Alexander Lukashenko, who has dismissed concerns about the virus as a “psychosis,” said at the parade that Belarus' ordeal in the war “is incomparable with any difficulties of the present day.”

Belarus's more than 21,000 recorded infections is higher than in neighboring Ukraine and Poland, both with populations about four times the size.

The former Soviet republic of Turkmenistan, which has not reported any coronavirus infections, held a large parade and procession late Saturday in the capital Ashgabat.

Trump eyes federal retirement plan in China showdown

The Washington Post

President Donald Trump's intensifying showdown with China over its handling of the coronavirus pandemic is expanding to a new battlefield: the retirement portfolios of 5.9 million federal employees and U.S. service members.

In recent days, White House officials have moved to seize control of a little-known board that administers the \$557 billion federal retirement program for most active and retired federal employees and military members, with some aides eager to halt the flow of billions of dol-

lars into an index fund that includes Chinese companies, according to two White House officials and an outside Trump adviser.

Trump on Monday nominated three members to replace the majority on the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board, made up of five investment experts who oversee the retirement plan. All of their four-year terms have expired, and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., have not replaced those serving in the two seats they control.

With its new nominees, the White House is taking steps to block the plan's \$40 billion international fund from investing in a fund that contains about 11% of China-based stocks, according to people familiar with the strategy.

The effort to block any Chinese investment by the retirement plan comes as the current board is preparing to transfer assets to the new fund. The board has said that it is following a responsible investment strategy — recommended twice by an outside consultant — that will allow its members

to accrue potential gains from China's growing economy.

Advocates for federal workers have said that reversing the strategy could hurt millions of employees saving for retirement by walling off investments that are widely available in other 401(k)-type plans.

“Participants want investment options that pass the fiduciary responsibility test — not any political test,” said Jacqueline Simon, policy director for the American Federation of Government Employees, the largest union representing federal workers.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Sea turtle still being tracked a year later

FL MARATHON — An adult loggerhead sea turtle, released off the Florida Keys a year ago, is still being tracked via satellite.

“Mr. T” was admitted to the Turtle Hospital for several surgeries to remove a fishhook. He was returned to the ocean May 7, 2019, fitted with a satellite tag that was epoxied to his shell to track migratory patterns of male loggerheads.

Since the release, the turtle has traveled more than 1,600 miles. Currently the marine reptile is off Key Largo.

Turtle Hospital Manager Bette Zirkelbach said that it’s unusual for the small transmitter to remain on a sea turtle for so long and to keep working.

“Typically, they (transmitters) fall off in about four to six months, but because ‘Mr. T’ is an adult, his continued growth is very slow,” she said. “His shell does not shed as much as a younger turtle.”

Man pleads guilty to vandalizing temple

UT LOGAN — A Utah man pleaded guilty to burglary and criminal mischief after authorities said he vandalized a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints temple and caused over \$5,000 in damage.

Peter Abraham Ambrose, 34, entered his plea to the second-degree felonies as part of an agreement with prosecutors to recommend no prison time and credit for time served in jail, The Herald Journal reported.

Ambrose broke into the Logan temple on Christmas Eve and is responsible for broken glass, a discharged fire extinguisher and an ax in a wall,

police said. He told officers he was upset he could not see his children during the holiday, and that no church women wanted to date him, according to the Logan Police Department.

Zoo announces birth of American red wolves

NC ASHEBORO — The North Carolina Zoo in Asheboro announced the birth of five American red wolves.

The animals are critically endangered. There are only 15 to 20 red wolves still believed to be in the wild in eastern North Carolina.

The pups, born April 21, were named after plants found in North Carolina. The parents of the pups are mother Piglet and father Jewell.

The births bring the number of red wolves in the zoo’s breeding program to 25. That makes it the second-largest pack in the nation after Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium in Tacoma, Wash.

Police: Woman drove drunk at 109 mph

NH EXETER — Police accused a New Hampshire woman of driving drunk and traveling up to 109 miles an hour while a trooper tried to stop her.

A trooper saw an SUV pass him at 93 miles an hour along Route 101 in Exeter. The SUV did not stop for the trooper’s emergency lights and siren. It reversed direction and drove on the wrong side of a road. Troopers deployed stop sticks to deflate the vehicle’s front tires, police said.

The driver, Trista White, 35, of Plaistow, was taken into custody. She was arrested on charges of aggravated driving while intoxicated, reckless conduct and operation and disobeying an officer.

Mermaids to return to bar to entertain patrons

MT GREAT FALLS — For patrons at a Montana tiki bar that has a back wall of a window into a motel swimming pool, it’s typical to see mermaids in the water five nights a week.

So as the owner of the O’Haire Motor Inn and the Sip ‘n Dip Lounge in Great Falls began preparing to reopen the bar after eight weeks of coronavirus-related restrictions, she wanted things to be as close to normal as possible — and that included the underwater entertainment.

Sandra Thares said she emailed regulators for guidance on whether mermaid shows could resume.

After some back-and-forth in which the governor’s office noted hotel pools could reopen for registered guests with social distancing guidelines, the county OK’d the mermaid entertainment as long as only one mermaid was in the pool at a time, Thares said. There’s usually two. For now, the mermaids will get one four-hour shift per week.

Woman charged with mistreating horses

KY MONTICELLO — Police have charged a woman with 44 counts of animal cruelty after finding malnourished and dead horses on a Kentucky farm, according to court records.

Jacqueline Helton, 53, also faces charges of concealing diseased animals and improperly disposing of dead animals, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported, citing an arrest warrant from Kentucky State Police.

Officials searched and found four dead horses and 44 living

ones, according to the warrant.

Helton has faced similar charges in the past. In 2015, she was charged with animal cruelty, but the counts were dropped after she completed diversion.

Man on parole arrested for driving drunk again

WI MADISON — A Lake Delton man on parole for drunken driving is facing his fifth intoxicated driving charge after crashing his motorcycle on Interstate 94 in Jefferson County.

The man, 63, wasn’t breathing when a motorist stopped and found him along the interstate, according to authorities.

Officials say the man wasn’t wearing a helmet when he crashed into a construction barrel. The motorist performed CPR and the man was taken to a hospital in Oconomowoc.

Authorities said intoxicants were found at the scene and the odor of intoxicants was detected on the man, the State Journal reported

Coroner arrested for stealing campaign signs

GA METTER — A Georgia coroner was arrested in the theft of a political rival’s campaign signs, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation said.

Candler County Coroner Allen Tyler faces charges of theft and criminal trespass, according to the GBI news release. Tyler was caught on camera stealing the signs of candidate Joe Carter, the release said.

The release said the bureau was asked on April 8 to investigate allegations that campaign signs were stolen.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

UFC ushers in fan-free, mask-filled era

Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Kicks, punches and grunts echoed through the empty arena. Coaches, commentators and camera clicks resonated like never before. Blood, sweat, swollen eyelids and face masks signaled the return of UFC, the first major sporting event to resume since the coronavirus shuttered much of the country for nearly two months.

UFC 249 ushered in a new look for sports, too. One without fans and amid several safety precautions.

It was definitely different — two fighters adjusted their approaches because of what they heard announcers say — and a welcome reprieve for a sports-craved country that went nearly eight weeks with few live events.

“We did this for you, to bring sports back,” fighter Tony Ferguson told fans following his loss in the main event.

Five hours after President Donald Trump congratulated UFC for restarting the sports world, Justin Gaethje stunned heavily favored Ferguson (26-4) in the finale. Gaethje earned a TKO in the fifth and final round of the headliner that was deemed an interim

lightweight title bout. It essentially gives Gaethje (22-2) the right to fight titleholder Khabib Nurmagomedov next. Nurmagomedov was unable to fight this weekend because of travel restrictions.

Gaethje flipped over the top of the cage and back in following his biggest win.

“I want the real one,” he said as he threw down the interim belt.

The stacked card saw 33-year-old Henry Cejudo, with blood gushing from his forehead and running down his chest, defend his bantamweight title against Dominick Cruz and then announce his retirement in the middle of the octagon.

The event also included heavyweight contender Francis Ngannou pummeling another opponent, former NFL defensive end Greg Hardy winning for the sixth time in eight fights and former welterweight champion and fan favorite Donald “Cowboy” Cerrone losing his fourth straight. “I want to congratulate (UFC President) Dana White and the UFC,” Trump said in a taped message. “They’re going to have a big match. We love it. We think it’s important. Get the sports leagues back. Let’s play. Do the

social distancing and whatever else you have to do. We need sports. We want our sports back.”

Also on the card:

■ Cejudo (16-2) caught Cruz (22-3) with a right knee to the face that sent him reeling to the canvas. Cejudo then delivered nearly a dozen unanswered blows before the referee stopped it. Cruz argued it never should have been called because he was working to get back on his feet. Cejudo surprisingly ended his career a few minutes later, saying he wants to spend more time with his family.

■ Ngannou knocked out fellow heavyweight Jairzinho Rozenstruik in 20 seconds. Ngannou rushed Rozenstruik and delivered a flurry of blows that left Rozenstruik woozy long after the fight ended. It was Ngannou’s fourth consecutive victory totaling less than 3 minutes in the octagon.

■ Calvin Kattar (21-4) stopped Jeremy Stephens (28-18) in the second round after consecutive elbow blows, one standing and another on the ground.

■ Hardy (6-2) celebrated a unanimous decision over Yorgan De Castro (6-1) in a heavyweight bout.

■ “Showtime” Pettis (23-10) beat Cerrone (36-15) in an unanimous decision. Pettis and Cerrone last fought in 2013. Pettis won that one as well. Cerrone has dropped four in a row.

■ Aleksei “The Boa Constrictor” Oleinik (59-13-1) beat Fabricio Werdum (23-9-1) in a heavyweight bout featuring a pair of 42-year-olds. It was a split decision that included more toe-to-toe blows than ground grappling.

■ Carla Esparza (16-6) edged Michelle “Karate Hottie” Waterson (17-8) in a split decision. It was Esparza’s third straight victory in the strawweight division.

■ Vicente Luque (18-7-1) won for the seventh time in eight fights when he beat Niko Price (14-4). The fight was ruled a TKO in the third round after Price developed a cut above his right eye. Luque was ahead on all three cards when it was called.

■ Featherweight Bryce Mitchell (13-1) defeated fellow grappler Charles Rosa (12-4) in a unanimous decision.

■ Light heavyweight Ryan Spann (18-5) extended his winning streak to eight by beating veteran Sam Alvey (33-14) in a split decision.

Epidemiologist calls UFC ‘negligent’ in restarting

The Washington Post

The day after UFC 249 fighter Ronaldo “Jacare” Souza tested positive for the novel coronavirus, an Atlanta-based epidemiologist sharply criticized the mixed martial arts organization for botching proper safety protocols amid the pandemic.

Zachary Binney, an adjunct instructor of epidemiology at the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University, posted to his Twitter page Saturday morning that UFC and its president, Dana White, “were negligent” in restarting too soon, adding, “If this was your system working as designed, your system is bogus.”

The UFC announced Souza’s positive test Friday, removing the middleweight from his scheduled bout against Uriah Hall for the event in Jacksonville, Fla. Two of Souza’s cornermen also tested positive and like

Souza, were found to be asymptomatic.

On Friday, Souza wore face protection and gloves as he stepped onto the scale during the weigh-in. He was tested again, according to published reports, before fighter faceoffs, during which time White touched fists with Souza and came into contact with other fighters.

Souza, based in Orlando, Fla., had driven to Jacksonville on Wednesday and informed UFC officials he had been exposed to a family member infected with the coronavirus. UFC subsequently tested Souza, permitting him to remain on the card.

Souza and his entire team, according to a UFC statement, left the host hotel to self-quarantine off the premises.

Video released early Saturday morning, however, appeared to show Souza failing to maintain social distance at the hotel around

other fighters before the weigh-in.

“The response to this development is indicative of the effectiveness of the health and safety measures UFC has put in place for this event,” the statement read in part, with UFC adding no other fighters had tested positive.

But in series of tweets, Binney questioned the UFC on several of its decisions, particularly as they related to social distancing. Binney, for instance, called the UFC “reckless” for allowing Souza to attend the weigh-in despite him having notified officials he had been exposed.

“No, I don’t buy this is the system working as designed and proof UFC and Dana White are being responsible,” Binney tweeted.

UFC 249 was the first of three events this week, with approval from the Florida State Boxing Commission.

GMs wary of NHL's early draft idea

Associated Press

The NFL's successful virtual draft and uncertainty surrounding the resumption of hockey this season have raised the possibility of an NHL draft held before the Stanley Cup Final.

After postponing its draft scheduled for June 26-27 in light of the coronavirus pandemic, the NHL is considering having it earlier in June with the season in an indefinite suspension. There are mixed feelings among executives about the idea, ranging from frustration to begrudging acceptance.

"We're just going to try to prepare as though it's going to happen," Toronto Maple Leafs general manager Kyle Dubas said. "It's not going to be normal regardless of what it is, so we're fine with whatever is decided."

Unlike the NFL, which held its draft as usual in the middle of its offseason, the NHL would face several wrinkles going for-

ward with a draft held before the season is complete: Teams would not be able to trade players, there would be a lack of clarity over next year's salary cap and the draft order could be determined before all games are played.

It would put hockey back in the spotlight for a couple of days. It would also create plenty of headaches for those involved.

"I have not talked to one GM who likes it, and I talk to almost all of them," agent Allan Walsh said Thursday.

A week after the league sent a memo to teams outlining its proposal, Deputy NHL Commissioner Bill Daly on Friday said a decision has not made on the timing of the draft. GMs have asked for a month's notice before holding a draft.

"My thought is: Why would you do that? Why do you need to do that?" Red Wings GM Steve Yzerman said on Fox Sports Detroit. "I haven't heard a good reason why we should do it

prior to the end of the season if we do conclude the season over the course of the summer."

Yzerman's Red Wings could actually benefit from an adjusted draft lottery that gives him better odds at the top pick, likely Alexis Lafreniere. But Yzerman pointed to a litany of unknowns, including who's in and out of the playoffs and how the draft order is determined.

There's also the matter of the 2020-21 salary cap, which was initially projected at \$84 million but is now expected to be set at the current \$81.5 million or less.

"The draft serves a lot of different purposes in giving GMs the tools to build their roster for the next year apart from just drafting seven rounds of players," Walsh said. "The cap teams — the Torontos, the Tampas — are going to have to move at least one big contract to make it work. And the time to do it is at the draft. But you can't do it under a first week or second week of June scenario

when you don't know if the season is canceled or whether we are really going to come back and play."

Daly said the NHL still hasn't decided when to allow players to return to team training facilities for small group workouts, which would be the first step toward a return.

The league continues to work internally and with the NHL Players' Association on various scenarios, including resuming at three or four empty NHL arenas and pushing the start of next season back to December.

With that in mind, Los Angeles GM Rob Blake said the Kings are "quite comfortable with either scenario" of the draft happening in June or later. Many of his colleagues are in the same boat.

"We'll have to work with it, obviously," Blake said. "The one thing we know for sure is nothing will be status quo, so whether it's prior in June or later, you're going to have to make the necessary adjustments."

Falcons' Allen uneasy about going back to practice

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Ricardo Allen didn't budge when Georgia was one of the first states to open businesses during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Atlanta Falcons safety believes it is smart to stay home. He says he worries about the time when teams across the league open for practice.

Restaurants, barber shops and other businesses were cleared by Gov. Brian Kemp in late April to open their doors. Allen believes the smart move is to stay home.

The NFL has set protocols for reopening team facilities and has made a 2020 season seem more real by releasing schedules this week. All of which makes Allen uneasy.

"This is nerve-wracking," he said this week. "This is different. This is something that us as players and us as human beings, we've never had to think about before."

The NFL has not announced dates for when players can return to team facilities.

Allen sees daily reminders of lives lost to COVID-19 as he adheres to his quarantine. He knows the virus can kill anyone, even

professional athletes.

"It's tough to look at the news sometimes and see all the cases and all the trauma and the deaths that are going on in this world, and we know that we're not like immune to it," Allen said. "We know no one is immune to it."

That's why Allen stays home. He says most of his teammates have taken the same safety-first stance "as much as possible."

"Everybody is still trying to find ways to be creative and still work out, but really that's all I've seen my teammates do," he said. "I haven't seen many people leave the house other than to just go to a private workout."

Falcons left tackle Jake Matthews' private workouts at his home near Houston have included time spent with his father, Pro Football Hall of Famer Bruce Matthews. Jake Matthews said last month his father puts him through "some old-school gasser conditioning run workout," and it's not easy.

Matthews relishes the extra time with his father but misses the traditional offseason program.

"When we were supposed to be showing up and reporting ... it just felt weird," Matthews said. "It felt like I was missing out, like everyone else was there and I wasn't. It really is a weird situation and it does make you kind of reflect a little bit."

Those reflections have convinced him he's ready to play.

"Yeah, I'm dying to get back at this point," Matthews said. "I've enjoyed the time off and kind of hanging out at home, but I'm ready for ball to start back up again." The Falcons and other NFL teams are attempting to remain on course for a 2020 season by having virtual offseason meetings. Allen sees his coaches and teammates by video conference.

He can't say when he'd feel safe to stand beside those teammates in a real huddle. He awaits guidance from NFL and government leaders.

"It's like, I don't know, to tell you the truth, I don't know," he said. "I'm just going to watch and see what they're going to do. I wouldn't like to be the person with that job. I wouldn't like to be that person who has to decide what's going to go on."